

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 16990

DEPT FOR SCI PASS AEC

E.O. 11652: DGS

TAGS: TECH, IN

SUBJECT: FRENCH NUCLEAR SAFEGUARDS

REF: A. NEW DELHI 9100 (NOTAL) B. NEW DELHI 9099

(NOTAL)

SUMMARY: AS EMBASSY NEW DELHI IMPLIES, CANADIANS SOLD THE FRENCH PLUTONIUM PRODUCED IN CANADIAN REACTORS AND NOT IN AN INDIAN REACTOR. INDIAN INVOLVEMENT FOLLOWED FROM THEIR BILATERAL SAFEGUARDS AGREEMENT WITH THE CANADIANS. ACCORDING TO FRENCH NUCLEAR OFFICIAL, FRENCH SHARE WITH NPT SIGNATORIES THE OBJECTIVE OF PREVENTING NUCLEAR WEAPONS PROLIFERATION BUT PREFER MORE FLEXIBLE MEANS, DECIDED ON A CASE BY CASE BASIS. END SUMMARY.

1. REF B FROM NEW DELHI REPORTS CONVERSATION OF AEC OFFICIAL OMENN AND EMBASSY PARIS SCIATT WITH BERTRAND GOLDSCHMIDT, HEAD INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS FOR
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THE COMMISSARIAT DE L'ENERGIE ATOMIQUE (CEA).
FOLLOWING IS CLARIFICATION OF THAT REPORT.

2. PER REF A FRENCH DID NOT BUY FROM THE CANADIANS PLUTONIUM PRODUCED IN THE INDIAN REACTOR BUILT BY THE CANADIANS. WHAT GOLDSCHMIDT SAID, AS RECOLLECTED BY SCIATT AND LATER CONFIRMED BY GOLDSCHMIDT'S ASSISTANT, WAS THAT IN SEPTEMBER 1968 THE CANADIANS SOLD THE FRENCH PLUTONIUM PRODUCED IN CANADA. HOWEVER, BECAUSE OF THE EXISTING SAFEGUARDS AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE CANADIANS AND THE INDIANS, THE INDIANS INSISTED ON THEIR RIGHT TO CONTROL CANADIAN EXPORTS OF PLUTONIUM. AS THEY WERE PIQUED AT THE CANADIANS AT THE TIME, THEY VETOED THE PROPOSED SALE. THE FRENCH THEREUPON PREVAIL-
ED UPON THE INDIANS AND CONVINCED THEM TO RELENT.

3. PARAGRAPH 1 REF B SHOULD NOT REPEAT NOT BE INTER-
PRETED AS INDICATING A LACK OF FRENCH CONCERN FOR SAFE-
GUARDS. THE WHOLE THRUST OF GOLDSCHMIDT'S REMARKS WAS
THAT THE FRENCH HAD THE SAME OBJECTIVE AS NPT SIGNATOR-
IES, THAT IS, TO PREVENT THE PROLIFERATION OF NUCLEAR
WEAPONS. THEY HAVE, HOWEVER, A DIFFERENT VIEWPOINT ON
THE MEANS TO ACHIEVE THIS OBJECTIVE. THEY PREFER A
FLEXIBLE CASE BY CASE APPROACH, ADAPTABLE TO SPECIFIC
CHARACTERISTICS OF EACH CASE (AS NOTED IN REF B PARA
6.). THUS THEY BELIEVE THEY CAN AVOID SUCH UN-
INTENDED PROBLEMS AS THE INDIAN INTERVENTION INTO THE
CANADIAN SALE OF PLUTONIUM TO FRANCE. GOLDSCHMIDT
CONTINUED THAT THE FRENCH RECORD ON SAFEGUARDS IS CLEAN
EXCEPT FOR THE DIMONA REACTOR THE FRENCH BUILT FOR THE
ISRAELIS BEFORE THE SYSTEM OF SAFEGUARDS TOOK ITS
PRESENT FORM. THIS ACTION THEY NOW PROFOUNDLY
REGRET.

4. RE REF B PARA 4, GOLDSCHMIDT ALSO SAID THAT THE
FRENCH DID NOT IN ANY WAY HELP THE INDIANS DIRECTLY IN
DEVELOPING A CAPABILITY FOR EXPLODING NUCLEAR DEVICES,
UNLESS ONE INCLUDES THE EXPERTISE INDIAN SCIENTISTS
HAVE ACQUIRED IN FRENCH UNIVERSITIES AND LABORATORIES.
ON SEPARATE OCCASIONS BOTH HE AND AN MFA OFFICIAL HAVE
ASSURED US THAT ADEQUATE SAFEGUARDS EXIST ON THE FAST-
BREEDER EXPERIMENTAL REACTOR THE FRENCH BUILT IN INDIA.
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HE CONTINUED THAT THE FRENCH DID NOT SAFEGUARD THE
HEAVY-WATER PLANTS THEIR INDUSTRIAL CONCERNS BUILT
IN INDIA BECAUSE THEY DID NOT FEEL IT WAS EITHER NECES-
SARY OR POSSIBLE TO DO SO.

5. WITH THE ABOVE CLARIFICATIONS AND ADDITIONS, REF B
IS A USEFUL RECORD OF THE REMARKS OF A LEADING, KNOW-
LEDGEABLE FRENCH NUCLEAR OFFICIAL.
IRWIN

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